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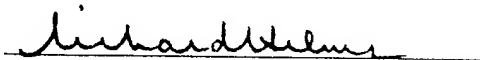
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Main Issues In Soviet Military Policy

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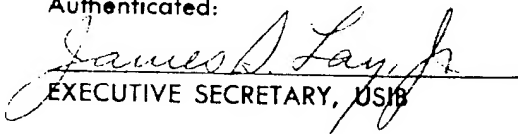
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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE PROBLEM	1
CONCLUSIONS	1
DISCUSSION	3
I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. INTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING MILITARY POLICY	3
Political-Military Relations	3
Economic Considerations	4
III. THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US	6
The Arms Control Talks	7
Trends in Strategic Forces	8
IV. MILITARY PROBLEMS IN EUROPE AND THE FAR EAST	9
The USSR and Europe	10
The USSR and China	12
Theater Force Requirements	13
Strategic Requirements	13
V. THE PROJECTION OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER AND INFLUENCE	14
Soviet Military Aid	15

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**APPROVED FOR RELEASE
CIA HISTORICAL-REVIEW PROGRAM**

MAIN ISSUES IN SOVIET MILITARY POLICY

THE PROBLEM

To examine the significant issues in Soviet military policy and to assess their implications for Soviet military programs over the next 5-10 years.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Recent developments have raised a greater possibility of significant changes in Soviet military policy than at any time since the fall of Khrushchev. The collective leadership now faces major decisions concerning both the strategic and general purpose forces. Among the alternatives are some that would represent a departure from the policy of the past several years; whether any of these will be adopted will depend not only upon the power balance within the Soviet leadership, but also upon external political developments and upon the leadership's reaction to them.

B. The focus of Soviet military policy is on strategic and political relationships with the US. In the past few years the Soviets have greatly strengthened their strategic forces and in some respects have overtaken the US. Moscow probably feels that it has attained an acceptable strategic balance—the most favorable of the postwar era. Its willingness to discuss strategic arms control with the US probably reflects this judgment, as well as its desire to mitigate the economic burden of the arms race. Within the limits allowed by any strategic arms control agreement, we believe that the USSR would continue to strengthen its strategic forces, both offensive and defensive. In the absence of an agreement the Soviets will probably continue the arms competition with the US and devote increased resources to strategic weapons programs.

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C. Soviet military policy toward Europe is strongly colored by political considerations. The Soviets have continued their efforts to strengthen the Warsaw Pact as an instrument not only of military defense against the West, but also of political influence in Eastern Europe. The recent events in Czechoslovakia, one of the "northern tier" states upon which the USSR placed main reliance, have raised profound questions concerning the value of the Pact to Soviet military policy in Europe. We believe that the USSR is determined to maintain its position in Eastern Europe and that it will continue to station substantial forces there. It probably also will strengthen its theater forces in the western USSR.

D. China, which the Soviets previously considered a border security problem, now seems to be viewed as a major threat. Since 1965, the USSR has nearly doubled its forces along China's borders. There has been no similar buildup on the Chinese side, and disorders in China would seem to make an attack on the USSR highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the Soviets are evidently concerned over the possibility of a Chinese attack, a Chinese move against Mongolia, or perhaps a collapse of the Peking regime which could necessitate Soviet intervention. The continuing buildup against China together with the new requirements for Eastern Europe will probably result in a significant increase in Soviet theater forces. Any strategic threat that China may develop can for some years be met by existing strategic forces, but for the longer term Moscow must consider the problem of antiballistic missile defenses.

E. We do not believe that the USSR will seek to rival the large US capabilities for distant, limited, military action. On the other hand, the projected improvement of the Soviet general purpose forces will provide an increasingly useful tool for Soviet policy. Soviet forces, particularly naval forces, are likely to be more in evidence around the world, both in support of specific political objectives and as a demonstration of the USSR's great power status. Such forces would be capable of limited military intervention in situations in which Moscow saw a substantial Soviet interest and little risk of conflict with a major power. We look for a continuation of military aid as an arm of Soviet policy and its extension to new areas as opportunities occur.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Today, as for the past several years, the major problems of Soviet military policy concern the US, Europe, and China. The great bulk of the Soviet military effort has been directed to meeting the military challenge from these areas. Elsewhere in the world the USSR's military problems stem primarily from the use of military power and resources in support of Soviet foreign policy. Such problems have increased in number and importance as the USSR has become involved in new areas and its commitments have grown.

2. Even before the Czech crisis, the improved strategic relationship with the US, the restiveness of Eastern Europe, the unremitting hostility of China, the June war in the Middle East, and the prolonged conflict in Vietnam had raised new questions of priorities and requirements both within the Soviet military establishment and between the USSR and its allies. And the competition between civilian and military demands on national resources promised to sharpen as both military costs and consumer expectations rose. In this situation the Soviet leaders apparently were conducting a searching review of the military policies of the past few years and exploring options for the future.

3. The Czech crisis has raised no entirely new military problems for the USSR, but it has exacerbated old ones. Long concerned with the restiveness of its East European allies, the USSR, for political as well as military reasons, has sought to strengthen the Warsaw Pact; now the Pact is in some disarray and the Soviet leaders must entertain new doubts about the reliability of East European forces, particularly the Czech forces. The intervention has aroused new apprehensions within NATO and has probably arrested the decline in NATO military efforts, at least for a time. These considerations are relevant to future Soviet decisions concerning general purpose forces—decisions which will be greatly influenced by the course of events in Eastern Europe over the coming months. In the strategic weapons field, the Soviet leaders had, after considerable delay, agreed to discuss arms control with the US. But the Czech invasion has soured US-Soviet relations and put new obstacles in the way of a possible arms control agreement.

II. INTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING MILITARY POLICY

Political-Military Relations

4. Soviet military policy is in part a product of Kremlin politics, which, like politics elsewhere, involves questions of power—who makes the decisions—and of priorities—what decisions should be made. Under conditions of collective leadership, however, the decision-making process is complicated by the fact that nothing of consequence can be decided until it has been collec-

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tively scrutinized and weighed against the individual interests of the political leaders. This diffusion of authority has not prevented the leadership from dealing effectively with a wide range of problems, but it has tended to inhibit or delay initiative in defense matters.

5. This situation has had an important bearing on the relative weight of the military voice in Soviet councils. Not only has the political leadership seemed more responsive to special interest arguments, but at times the absence of clear signals from the top has given greater influence in the decision-making process to military and civilian advocates of improved military forces. Although the military itself has periodically shown signs of interservice rivalries over resource priorities and future force structuring, it has nonetheless been united in making its claims for continued preferential treatment in the allocation of resources. The increases in the military budget of the past few years indicate, moreover, that the vigor with which the military has presented its arguments has not gone unrewarded. The military has exploited and benefited from the resurgence of a more suspicious and fundamentalist Communist outlook that has occurred under the present collective leadership.

6. Trends in Soviet military doctrine have been generally consistent with the improvement in the fortunes of the military under the collective leadership. The role of the conventional forces as an instrument of national policy has been emphasized, but the Soviets have continued to stress the primacy of the strategic forces as the ultimate recourse in war. We believe that this relatively harmonious approach to military requirements reflected the general satisfaction of the military with the policy pursued by the new leadership.

7. Even before the Czech crisis, however, there were issues of military policy that promised to introduce new tensions into political-military relations. There is no persuasive evidence that the military played a decisive role in the very hard political-military decisions involved in the intervention in Czechoslovakia, or that their views came down on one or another side of the choices posed. They will, however, be much concerned with the implications of the new situation created by the Czech events for Soviet military posture and plans. Issues affecting the future of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet deployments in Central Europe, and even the pace of the strategic arms race will complicate the military's dealings with the political leadership for some time.

Economic Considerations

8. We believe that the perennial problem of resource allocation is likely to become a sharper issue in the making of Soviet military policy. In Khrushchev's last years Soviet military expenditures were temporarily stabilized, due in part to a pause in strategic weapon deployment and in part to his efforts to economize. Under the new leadership, however, they have continued to rise, primarily as the result of increased outlays for strategic weapons and for research and development (R&D). The increase has not outpaced the overall growth of the economy, but the requirements of these programs for scarce high-quality

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resources of the sort needed to sustain economic growth have aggravated the impact of defense spending.

9. We estimate current Soviet expenditures for military and space programs at about 20 billion rubles—the equivalent of about \$60 billion. Of this total, we believe that nearly 30 percent goes to the strategic attack and strategic defense forces combined, over 25 percent to the general purpose forces, 15 percent to command and general support, and 30 percent to military R&D and the space program. The distribution of expenditures for the Soviet military has changed substantially over the past several years, reflecting the pattern of priorities. The most pronounced change has occurred in expenditures for R&D and space, which in 1960 accounted for only 15 percent of the total. In the same year, expenditures for general purpose forces amounted to about 35 percent of the total.

10. Soviet criticism of the high level of arms expenditures in the US, which Kosygin termed "catastrophic," almost certainly reflected the leadership's concern over rising military costs in the USSR. The Soviet military leaders have undoubtedly pointed to the US military effort in pressing their claims for increased outlays for defense. And articles in the Soviet military press justifying such outlays and stressing the importance of heavy industry suggested that the "military-industrial complex" in the USSR saw a threat to its favored position. The immediate effect of the Czech crisis will be to strengthen the position of these elements.

11. In the past, the strategic forces have led in the competition for resources between the military establishment and the civilian economy. The Soviet leaders may have hoped that when certain strategic programs reached planned levels they could divert some of these resources to other uses—to the civilian economy, or perhaps to the relatively neglected general purpose forces. We believe that economic considerations weighed heavily in their decision to discuss arms control with the US. Any such calculations, however, probably have been upset by the Czech crisis, which almost certainly will lead to pressures for increases in the theater forces in excess of previous plans, and would weigh against cuts in other military spending. Thus an intensification of competition is likely not only between civilian and military programs, but also within the military establishment.

12. For the near term, at least, Soviet military expenditures almost certainly will continue to rise. New requirements for theater forces could not be met by reductions in outlays for other forces, even if the Soviets should seek to do so, and we doubt that they would in the present situation. Resources allocated to strategic programs are not readily transferrable. Nevertheless, the impact of the larger military effort on the economy will probably impel Soviet leaders to search for savings in military programs. It is possible that it will add to the incentives that led the USSR to agree to discuss strategic arms control with the US.

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III. THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US

13. Despite Moscow's immediate concern over its position in Eastern Europe, the most important issues of Soviet military policy relate to the strategic balance between the US and the USSR. The goals of Soviet strategic weapons programs were set at a time when the US enjoyed such a superiority in intercontinental delivery systems as to put the USSR at a political and psychological disadvantage. The aim of Soviet strategic policy, therefore, has been to achieve a more formidable deterrent and to narrow and eventually to overcome the US lead. Toward this end the Soviets have built strategic forces which provide a large assured destruction capability and important damage-limiting capabilities as well.

14. The Soviets evidently attach great importance to the attainment of strategic parity with the US, but we do not know how they define it. If they seek parity in numbers of intercontinental delivery vehicles, it is clear that they have not reached it. By 1970, their intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force will probably surpass the US force in numbers of launchers, but the Soviets will remain inferior in submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and heavy bombers. At present construction rates, they could match the US Polaris force by 1975, but their heavy bomber force will probably decline.¹ We believe, however, that in assessing the strategic balance the Soviets would go beyond numbers to consider qualitative differences in weapon systems such as warhead yield, the target system to be attacked, and damage-limiting capabilities. Viewed in this light, the Soviets may consider their capabilities for intercontinental attack roughly comparable to those of the US.

15. The Soviet concept of strategic forces differs from that of the US, which focuses upon intercontinental delivery systems. We believe that in the USSR the strategic mission is assigned to the Strategic Rocket Forces, Long Range Aviation, and ballistic missile submarines. All of these forces include elements—medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), medium bombers,² and diesel-powered submarines—which we believe are intended primarily for use in Eurasian operations. The US has no MRBMs or IRBMs and has virtually eliminated its medium bomber force. Moreover, the US has no counterpart to the Soviet submarine-launched cruise missiles, which, in addition to their primary antishipping role, also have the capability for use against land targets. If the Soviets include medium range as well as intercontinental delivery systems in their assessment of the strategic balance, they could conclude that the USSR had attained strategic parity with the US, or even superiority.

¹ Maj. Gen. Jack E. Thomas, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, does not believe there will be any appreciable change in the size of the Soviet heavy bomber force during the period of this estimate. For his view see the forthcoming NIE 11-8-68, "Soviet Strategic Attack Forces."

² Maj. Gen. Jack E. Thomas, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, continues to believe the Soviet medium bomber force has an intercontinental mission. For his views see NIE 11-8-68.

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16. Recent statements by Soviet leaders have in fact, laid claim to strategic parity or superiority for the USSR. In announcing Soviet acceptance of arms control talks, Gromyko described Soviet military power relative to that of the US as being "by no means lesser." A few days later, Brezhnev declared that the US planned "to try to achieve strategic superiority over the Soviet Union." These statements were undoubtedly intended to justify the Soviet decision to enter into arms control negotiations, but they may also reflect the USSR's appraisal of its present strategic position.

The Arms Control Talks

17. The timing of the belated Soviet acceptance of the US proposal for arms control talks raises questions of the USSR's motives. It would appear to run counter to repeated Soviet statements that any significant improvement in US-Soviet relations was impossible in the context of the Vietnam war. And it came only six months before a change of administration in Washington which could lead to changes in US arms control policy. Its timing, however, was probably dictated by a number of factors, political and military. The Soviets probably reasoned that the political climate had been changed by the initiation of negotiations between the US and North Vietnam, and they may have hoped to influence the US position in Paris. The delay in the Soviet response also permitted a considerable build-up in the Soviet ICBM force, thus strengthening the Soviet position at the conference table. And, finally, debate within the Soviet regime may have contributed to the delay.

18. The economic considerations contributing to the Soviet decision are probably no more compelling than the strategic considerations. Military arguments for strategic arms control in the USSR probably center around the present strategic situation, the most favorable to the USSR in the postwar period. Considering US plans for improvements in its strategic forces—antiballistic missile (ABM), Minuteman III, and Poseidon—the Soviets probably believe that a considerable sustained effort would be necessary to maintain the relative position they have now achieved. They may also be concerned lest the end of the Vietnam war enable the US to divert additional resources to its strategic forces. Finally, they may reason that further increments to their strategic forces would have little effect on the relationship between the US and the USSR so long as the US maintained its large, second-strike assured destruction capability. If these arguments were to prevail in the USSR, the Soviets would probably seek an agreement that preserved their present strategic relationship with the US.

19. It is too early to assess the full implications of the Czech crisis for Soviet policy toward arms control. The Soviets still have the same basic economic and military incentives; indeed, it is possible that the new military requirements generated by the Czech crisis have added to those incentives. Moreover, the present Soviet line seems to be that the Czech crisis is an internal Communist Bloc affair that should have no effect on the USSR's relations with the West. It is possible, therefore, that the Soviets will seek to proceed with arms control talks. At a minimum, however, the Czech crisis has delayed the opening of

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talks with the US and has dampened the prospects of any real progress toward arms control in the near term.

20. Nevertheless, we believe that the Soviet Government is still interested in some form of strategic arms control for both economic and military reasons. We cannot estimate, however, whether the USSR will actually accede to an arms control agreement, or, until the ultimate Soviet position is known, whether an agreement is possible. Moreover, the pressures against such an agreement within the Soviet system would be formidable. The Soviet Government's decision to negotiate was probably contested, and its opponents probably still hope to reverse it, and to continue the longstanding pattern of increases in Soviet strategic forces.

21. In any case, the Soviet leaders cannot base their strategic planning on the possibility of strategic arms control and will almost certainly explore other alternatives. They might consider a policy of minimum deterrence aimed only at maintaining a large assured destruction capability, or they might consider a try for strategic superiority of such an order that it could be translated into significant political gain. We consider it highly unlikely that the Soviets would select either of these courses of action. The first, that of unilateral deescalation, would involve a decision to sacrifice the hard-won gains of recent years. The second would involve economic sacrifices that are probably unacceptable to the present leadership and would almost certainly provoke a strong US reaction. We believe, therefore, that in the absence of a strategic arms control agreement the USSR will continue the arms competition with the US with the object of maintaining and if possible improving its relative strategic position.

Trends in Strategic Forces

22. The future size and composition of Soviet forces for intercontinental attack will depend not only on Soviet initiatives, but also upon developments on the US side, in particular upon US deployment of MIRVs and ABMs, and on the terms of any arms control agreement. The Soviet response will probably be both quantitative and qualitative. The intercontinental striking forces will probably include an ICBM force with at least as many launchers as those now programed for the US, a force of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines comparable to the US Polaris fleet, and a heavy bomber force significantly smaller than that of the US. We also estimate an increased emphasis on qualitative improvements, particularly those related to survivability and capacity to penetrate enemy defenses.³

23. Closely related to the question of force goals for strategic attack forces is the adequacy of strategic defenses. For a number of years, the Soviets have given equal priority to both. They have built air defenses which have a formidable capability against aircraft attacking at medium and high altitudes. They are currently deploying on a large scale a new long-range surface-to-air

³ Detailed estimates of Soviet strategic forces appear in the forthcoming NIE 11-8-68.

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missile (SAM) system which will greatly improve their capabilities against high-flying, supersonic aircraft and standoff weapons. They do not yet have adequate defense against strategic attack at very low altitudes.

24. In 1962 the Soviets began to deploy around Moscow an ABM system which was then still under development. Deployment is continuing and the first elements of the system will probably become operational this year. Changes in construction activity around Moscow suggest that the Soviets do not consider this system satisfactory, and they almost certainly will not deploy it elsewhere. Dissatisfaction with this system was probably one consideration behind the Soviets' decision to enter arms control talks. As soon as an improved system is available, the Soviets will probably deploy ABMs in defense of other areas, but their numbers may be restricted by an arms control agreement. We doubt that such a system could be brought into service before the early 1970's.⁴

25. *Strategic Policy Under Arms Control.* As noted above, we believe that Soviet interest in strategic arms control stems primarily from a desire to stabilize the present strategic situation of mutual deterrence and to conserve resources that would otherwise be consumed by strategic weapon programs. The Soviets are most unlikely to accede to an agreement that would limit their strategic options without securing these objectives.

26. Soviet strategic policy in an arms control environment can be forecast only in the most general way. Whatever the terms of an agreement, the development of Soviet strategic forces would not come to a standstill. The Soviets would almost certainly continue a strong R&D effort with the objectives of improving their strategic forces and of hedging against a possible abrogation of the treaty. They would also make qualitative improvements to their forces in the field, aimed at maintaining their assured destruction capability and improving their damage-limiting capabilities. But if, as we believe, economic considerations had played a large part in a decision to accept arms control, there would probably be some reduction in Soviet expenditures for strategic forces, or at least a leveling out.

IV. MILITARY PROBLEMS IN EUROPE AND THE FAR EAST

27. The major part of the Soviet military establishment consists of forces, strategic and general purpose, which are equipped and deployed for operations on the USSR's periphery. Most of these forces are concentrated in the West, but the traditional European orientation of Soviet military policy has undergone some modification in the past few years as the Soviets have sent strong reinforcements to the Chinese border area. Now the Soviets face a changed political and

⁴ Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Carroll, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Maj. Gen. Jack E. Thomas, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, and Brig. Gen. Vasco J. Fenili, the Acting Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believe that this paragraph unduly ignores the possibility that the SA-5 may possess an ABM capability. The question will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming NIE 11-3-68, "Soviet Strategic Air and Missile Defenses."

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military situation in Europe that will almost certainly alter their view of military requirements in that area. Thus, the military situation is changing on both the western and eastern frontiers of the USSR. The Soviet response to these changes will largely determine the size and composition of Soviet theater forces over the next several years.

The USSR and Europe

28. Soviet European policy is directed to the reduction or elimination of US influence in Europe, the isolation and containment of West Germany, and the weakening or destruction of the Atlantic alliance. Thus NATO remains the focus of the USSR's military policy and the chief determinant of its military requirements in Europe. Nevertheless, significant developments on the NATO side in the past few years—the emergence of a strategy of “flexible response,” the defection of France, US initiatives aimed at mutual force reductions—have had no apparent effect on Soviet military posture. Until the Czech crisis, there had been no appreciable change in the size or disposition of the massive Soviet forces arrayed against the West.

29. Soviet military policy in Europe, however, is shaped as much by political considerations as by military requirements. For example, the official Soviet line that France's departure has actually increased the threat by giving West Germany more influence in NATO's councils also supports the more general Soviet objective of discouraging contacts between Eastern Europe and the West. The Soviet view of the military threat from NATO seems unrealistic and inflated. It is possible that it reflects to some extent real but irrational fears of a resurgent Germany, which the Soviets are determined to keep divided. It is used also to justify the continuing Soviet effort to strengthen the Warsaw Pact, which serves Soviet policy both as a military counterpoise to NATO and as the institutional framework for the exercise of Soviet political control in Eastern Europe.

30. The Soviets almost certainly have considered the military contribution of the East European countries an important one. Not only have they constituted a buffer between the USSR and Western Europe, but to the extent that their forces met military requirements posed by NATO, they took the place of forces that would otherwise have to be raised in the USSR. Moreover, in the event of war with NATO, the Soviets had planned to assign key missions to East European forces, particularly those of the “northern tier” states—East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Warsaw Pact exercises and other evidence indicated that in a campaign against the NATO central region the main weight of attack would be delivered by Soviet and East German forces in the center, and by the Polish and Czech forces in their respective areas; the Polish and Czech armies would be organized under autonomous national commands subordinate to the Warsaw Pact supreme command. These plans assumed the reliability of the “northern tier” armies and the continuing stability and cooperation of their governments, assumptions basic to the USSR's military policy of the past several years.

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31. Until the recent events in Czechoslovakia, these assumptions were not seriously questioned despite an increasing number of problems within the Pact. But the revival of nationalism in Eastern Europe in the past few years has been manifested in increasingly assertive criticism of Pact arrangements. Some East European states have raised questions concerning the validity and realism of Pact strategic planning, the Soviet monopoly on command and decision-making, the price and quality of Soviet equipment, and the heavy cost of their contribution to Pact forces. Rumania, which has termed the Pact an "anachronism," has cut its forces and reduced its participation in Pact affairs to the point that it can be considered little more than a nominal member. Until recently, the Soviets appeared willing to accept some diversity within the Pact, but Czechoslovakia seems to have exceeded the bounds.

32. The harshness of the Soviet reaction to developments in Czechoslovakia relates both to political changes within the country and to its strategic location. The USSR could tolerate the recalcitrance of Rumania in Pact affairs, but the defection or even the noncooperation of a "northern tier" state would undermine the bases of Soviet military policy and planning in Europe. Similarly, while the Soviets apparently regard Rumanian nationalism as only a venial sin, they considered the liberalization of the Czech regime as a mortal one. Thus in Czechoslovakia they saw a threat to the entire system of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. In fact, however, that system had been losing cohesiveness for some time, and it may be that belated recognition of this fact helped to precipitate the heavyhanded Soviet response.

33. In the aftermath of the Czech crisis the Soviets will face military problems in Europe which they can only regard with grave concern. In their attempt to shore up their East European position, they have in fact removed one of its main supports; the Czech armed forces, with 11 divisions and some 600 aircraft, were among the most effective in Eastern Europe. For the near term at least, the Soviets will probably not feel able to count on the reliability of these forces in any serious contingency in Central Europe. The Soviet military leadership will want to fill the gap. In Moscow, the Czechs probably agreed to the permanent stationing of Soviet forces on Czech soil. But while this will suffice for the political purpose of keeping the Czechs docile, it does not replace the military capabilities formerly provided by the Czech armed forces. The Soviets obviously hope to restore a political situation in Czechoslovakia which will permit renewed confidence in the Czech forces.

34. Beyond Czechoslovakia, the recent events in Europe have raised profound questions concerning the value of the Warsaw Pact to Soviet military policy in Europe. For political reasons, the Soviets are clearly determined to preserve the Pact. They evidently value it as a symbol of unity in an increasingly fragmented Communist world. Moreover, it justifies the Soviet military presence in Europe.

35. The major problem for Soviet military policy in Europe is that of the reliability of the East European regimes—i.e., whether the Soviets can continue to

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consider the East European forces as extensions of Soviet military power. In a show of political solidarity, they were able to secure the participation of these forces—East German, Polish, Bulgarian, and Hungarian—in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. But the feelings of their allies were probably mixed and the Soviets cannot regard this charade as a true measure of their reliability. The only completely submissive Soviet allies at this point are East Germany and Bulgaria. In these circumstances the USSR probably sees increased requirements for Soviet theater forces for Europe.

The USSR and China

36. China, which in military terms was once considered by the Soviets as no more than a border security problem, now seems to be viewed as a major threat. The evidence does not indicate that the Chinese are making military preparations along the border. Furthermore, the near chaos in China would seem to make an attack on the USSR highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the Soviets evidently feel that they must allow for the possibility, however remote, that an irrational Mao could order the Chinese armed forces to attack the USSR. They are probably also concerned that the political order in China may collapse entirely, posing for the USSR the question of whether or not to intervene.

37. The Soviet leaders undoubtedly hope that the Mao regime will be replaced by a new leadership with whom friendly relations can be established, although the more realistic among them probably expect a continuation of great power rivalry even after Mao's demise. Moreover, for the near term at least, the Soviet general staff can hardly base its military planning on such hopes. The military threat from China has raised new problems of force levels, of deployment, and of logistics.

38. Soviet theater forces deployed near China have nearly doubled in strength since late 1965. The Soviets have deployed about 10 additional divisions to the border area, bringing the total strength there to 25. The buildup has apparently been accomplished primarily by strengthening units already in the Far East and by fleshing out cadres redeployed from the West. We believe that only about 7 of these divisions are fully combat ready, but all 25 probably could be by late 1969. Air defenses and tactical air support have been considerably strengthened, more than a dozen new airfields have been constructed, and nuclear capable missile units have been deployed along the border. The Soviets are apparently preparing for a variety of contingencies, including large-scale military operations—conventional or nuclear—against the Chinese. They are not only strengthening their defenses, but are also developing substantial capabilities for operations inside China. The two major operational groupings in the border area, one in the Southern Maritime region and one in the Transbaykal Military District (MD), are located in the most suitable areas for the mounting of large-scale ground operations against Northeast China.

39. The Soviets probably see the defense of Mongolia as their most immediate Eastern problem. Of the Soviet divisions sent to reinforce the Chinese border, 2 or 3 have gone to Mongolia and 3 to the neighboring Transbaykal MD; they

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have been accompanied by supporting air elements; and 9 of the new airfields are located in Mongolia. The mission of these forces is to deter the Chinese from attack and to prevent a pro-Chinese coup within the country. Considering Mongolia's limited capacity for self-defense, the Soviets probably consider that they will be more or less permanently committed to the protection of the country and its regime.

40. Though we cannot judge the ultimate extent of the buildup along the Chinese border, another 4 or 5 divisions are likely to be deployed in the near term. The logistic problems of supporting sizable forces in such remote areas must be substantial in terms of both transport and maintenance, especially since the reinforcement has involved some of the latest and most sophisticated Soviet equipment. Thus the buildup has already posed new requirements for the military planners. If it continues, they must weigh these against the military needs implied by the changed situation in Eastern Europe and decide whether to meet them by redeployment or by raising new forces.

41. China's emerging strategic capabilities pose a more serious potential threat to the USSR. The Soviets probably estimate that the Chinese will have a medium-range delivery capability before they achieve an intercontinental one, and they cannot be reassured by Chinese expressions of unconcern about the hazards of nuclear war. The Soviets probably rely on their great strategic superiority to deter the Chinese, but for the longer term they must consider the problem of defense against the Chinese strategic threat.

Theater Force Requirements

42. Over the next few years there is likely to be substantial increase in the strength of the Soviet theater forces. The buildup on the Chinese border, when completed, is likely to result in an overall increase on the order of 150,000 men in total ground force strength. In addition, the Soviets must now consider to what extent they can continue to rely on the East European forces to meet their military requirements in Europe. We believe that the USSR is determined to maintain its position in Eastern Europe and that it will continue to station substantial forces there. It probably also will strengthen its theater forces in the western USSR.

Strategic Requirements

43. Soviet strategic forces for peripheral operations are now deployed primarily against Europe, an emphasis that will probably continue. Developments in Eastern Europe have underlined their deterrent value against NATO. At the same time, the Soviets have seen new requirements for strategic forces in the threat from China; the mobile missile units deployed on the Chinese border will almost certainly be supplemented by additional longer range systems.

44. The Soviet strategic forces appear adequate in size to meet the requirements of both the European and Far Eastern theaters. They include some 700 MRBM and IRBM launchers, 700-750 medium bombers, and about 30 diesel-

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powered ballistic missile submarines. Moreover, the capabilities of these forces will probably improve significantly over the next several years in terms of flexibility and survivability. By the mid-1970's the MRBM/IRBM force will probably consist of new missile systems deployed in hard and mobile launchers; the medium bomber force will probably decline in numbers but the introduction of air-to-surface missiles (ASMs) will tend to compensate for this and improved bombers may be brought into service. As the buildup against China continues, we believe that there will be some redistribution of strategic forces.

45. The question of defense against the potential strategic threat posed by Chinese missile development has probably been deferred. The Soviets almost certainly believe that their great superiority in offensive strategic weapons will enable them to cope with any threat that might materialize in the foreseeable future, and they hope for a political change in China that would remove this possibility. If the Chinese should begin to deploy strategic missiles against the USSR, the Soviets probably would meet the threat initially by retargeting and perhaps redeploying some of their MRBM/IRBM force. In the longer term, they would probably deploy light ABM defenses against the Chinese threat at a few key targets.

V. THE PROJECTION OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER AND INFLUENCE

46. A problem that has become of increasing concern to the USSR in recent years is that of adapting its military power to the range of political uses that its growing commitments and interests require. The Soviet use of military power for political ends has ranged from threats to large-scale intervention; in this respect, Soviet practice has resembled that of other great powers in the past. The pattern of usage, however, has been different due to the changed character of war in the nuclear age, to limitations on Soviet military capabilities, to the nature of the Soviet political system, and to geographic factors.

47. In the postwar era the USSR has used its military forces cautiously and sparingly. Except for the Cuban missile venture, which was an aberration of policy, it has consistently avoided a direct military confrontation with the US or a military challenge to vital US interests. The USSR has used its own military forces to impose its will only in Eastern Europe where in the Soviet view vital national interests were at stake. In conflicts elsewhere in the world the USSR has relied on local forces to achieve its ends, providing them with political and military support.

48. The generally cautious Soviet attitude toward military involvement has almost certainly been influenced by an awareness of the limitations on the USSR's capability to project its military power to areas distant from its periphery. Over the past several years Soviet airlift and sealift capabilities have improved considerably, but the USSR still lacks the sea and air combat capabilities necessary for distant operations against significant opposition. The USSR is undoubtedly concerned over the much greater capability of the US for such operations, which not only provides additional options for the US, but also

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imposes limitations on Soviet actions. In Vietnam, however, where this disparity has been most apparent, the Soviets may not think that it has worked to their net disadvantage.

49. In Vietnam, the Soviets have avoided direct military involvement which would have entailed a confrontation with the US and have sought instead to achieve their policy objectives by supporting indigenous Communist forces. The political stakes in the Soviet view have been high: the further extension of communism in Southeast Asia, the prestige of the USSR and its claim to leadership of the Communist world, and the opportunity to discredit the US politically and to cast doubt on its military strength. Because of US control of the seas and Chinese hostility, the problem of supporting the Vietnamese forces has been difficult, but the cost to the USSR has been relatively small as compared with US expenditures; Soviet military aid to Vietnam for the period 1965-1967 totaled something over \$1 billion. And while the issue is far from resolved, the Soviets probably estimate that in the long term they will achieve many of their political aims. Certainly, they will not see in their Vietnam experience any pressing requirement to develop large capabilities for distant, limited military action against opposition of a major power. Considering the massive expenditure of resources that would be required to achieve such capabilities, we do not believe that they will challenge US superiority in this respect.

50. Nevertheless, the USSR's use of military power to support its political objectives is likely to increase. The normal improvement in its military capabilities will broaden its political options. This trend is already apparent in the expanded Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean which, in addition to its military missions, serves Soviet political aims in the Middle East. The recent extensive naval visits in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf indicate that the Soviets foresee new opportunities in that area. Soviet forces, particularly naval forces, are likely to be more in evidence around the world, both in support of specific political objectives and as a demonstration of the USSR's great power status. Such forces would be capable of limited military intervention in situations in which Moscow saw a substantial Soviet interest and little risk of conflict with a major power.

Soviet Military Aid

51. The Soviets evidently consider military aid an important tool of diplomacy. Since the beginning of the program in 1955, they have extended about \$5 billion in military aid to non-Communist countries; in addition, Eastern Europe provided more than \$600 million. The military equipment involved was provided at discount prices for the most part and arrangements for payment were liberal, in a few cases including outright grants.

52. The recipients of Soviet and East European military aid for the most part have been targets of opportunity in developing areas where the Soviets have sought to displace Western influence and to create a climate conducive to the

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growth of Communist influence. The lion's share, more than half, has gone to the radical Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa. Indonesia, which accounts for nearly a quarter of the total, has received virtually all the military aid dispensed to non-Communist countries in the Far East. India, which has received something over 10 percent of the total, is the only other major recipient. Soviet and East European economic aid has concentrated upon the same areas.

53. The Soviet leaders must view the results of these substantial expenditures with mixed feelings. In some cases, the returns have been negative. Indonesia, for example, not only butchered its native Communists, but embarked on an independent foreign policy, and still owes the USSR for most of the aid received. The Arabs have been more cooperative, but their defeat by Israel reflected on Soviet military prestige. The political payoff from India has been small, but the USSR probably sees this aid program as part of its struggle with China.

54. In the wake of the June war in the Middle East, the Soviets probably recognized that along with its uncertain results military aid entailed some positive disadvantages. The provision of aid creates a dependency on the part of the recipients, but it also creates new obligations and commitments on the part of the donor. Thus, regardless of its inclinations, the USSR was automatically and heavily involved in the Arab-Israeli crisis from the outset. And after the disastrous defeat of the Arab states it was faced with the necessity of replenishing all or most of their losses. Moreover, in world affairs the donor becomes identified to some extent with the policies and actions of its client states over which it may have little control; in the Middle East crisis, the USSR almost certainly found this situation embarrassing and, on occasion, dangerous.

55. Nevertheless, Moscow still appears willing to give military aid wherever an opportunity offers itself to advance Soviet policy or to establish a political foothold in a new area. It has recently extended credits to Iran, South Yemen, and Sudan; offers of military aid to Jordan and Pakistan are outstanding; and Soviet military aid almost certainly will be extended to new areas of the underdeveloped world over the next several years. While the geographic scope of Soviet military aid is likely to grow, we do not envisage any appreciable change in the levels of aid from those immediately prior to 1967—barring, of course, any crisis similar to the Arab-Israeli war of that year.

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